

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 174982

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ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY NEA:ARDAY/HLK

APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

NEA - MR. ATHERTON

P - MR. HABIB

S/SO:AWOTTO

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 174982

EXDIS FOR AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: AEMR, US, LE

SUBJECT: EVACUATION FROM LEBANON

1. WE ARE PLANNING TO REDUCE THE EMBASSY BEIRUT STAFF TO A BARE MINIMUM AND TO URGE ALL REMAINING AMERICANS TO LEAVE LEBANON AT THIS TIME. AS WITH THE DEPARTURE OPERATION A MONTH AGO, WE WILL WANT EGYPTIAN ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE CONVEY THE FOLLOWING URGENTLY TO FAHMY.

2. IN RECENT WEEKS, CONDITIONS OF LIFE AND SECURITY HAVE, AS FAHMY KNOWS, WORSENEDED CONTINUALLY IN BEIRUT, INCREASING THE RISK TO OUR PERSONNEL AND LIMITING SEVERELY THE UTILITY OF OUR EMBASSY THERE. PRINCE FAHD HAS URGED US FOR SAFETY OF OUR PERSONNEL TO CLOSE THE EMBASSY, AS SAUDIS HAVE DONE. THIS WE ARE RELUCTANT TO DO, GIVEN THE ATTENTION IT WOULD RECEIVE AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF ITS BEING MISINTERPRETED AS A REFLECTION OF A LOSS OF INTEREST BY THE U.S. IN A SOLUTION TO THE LEBANESE CRISIS. WE TAKE HIS WARNING

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 174982

MOST SERIOUSLY, HOWEVER, AND WE HAVE DECIDED TO REDUCE THE

SIZE OF THE STAFF SHARPLY, LEAVING ONLY A BARE MINIMUM. AT THE SAME TIME, WE WILL BE STRONGLY URGING THE REMAINING AMERICANS IN THE CITY TO DEPART. WE ARE PLANNING TO ARRANGE TRANSPORTATION OUT OF THE COUNTRY FOR BOTH OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL AMERICANS, AND ANY THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS WHO MAY WISH TO JOIN US, ON TUESDAY, JULY 20. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE INVOLVED, BUT THERE COULD BE SEVERAL HUNDRED. AS IN THE CASE OF OUR DEPARTURE OPERATION IN JUNE, WE WOULD MUCH APPRECIATE EGYPTIAN ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE.

3. WE ARE EXPLORING FOUR ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF TRAVEL. WE HOPE TO AVOID USE OF NAVAL VESSELS, AND ARE AT THIS TIME CONSIDERING ONLY CIVILIAN MEANS OF TRANSPORT.

-- CHARTERED AIRCRAFT FROM BEIRUT AIRPORT;

-- ROAD CONVOY TO SYRIA;

-- SEA DEPARTURE ON CIVILIAN TRANSPORT VESSEL FROM BEIRUT;

-- SEA DEPARTURE ON CIVILIAN TRANSPORT VESSEL FROM SIDON (WHERE THERE ARE DOCKING FACILITIES THAT ARE NOT AVAILABLE IN BEIRUT).

4. MOVEMENT BY AIR WILL REQUIRE AGREEMENT OF THE ELEMENTS CONTROLLING THE AIRPORT. IT HAS OCCURRED TO US THAT THE ARAB LEAGUE FORCE MIGHT BE OF SOME ASSISTANCE IN THIS RESPECT. WE WOULD LIKE EGYPTIAN ADVICE ABOUT THE FEASIBILITY OF USING THE AIRPORT AND THEIR ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING THE COOPERATION OF ARAB LEAGUE FORCES IN ANY AIRBORNE DEPARTURE. MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE WOULD LIKE THE EGYPTIANS TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE PLO URGENTLY AND AT A HIGH LEVEL TO ENSURE THAT WE WOULD HAVE THE FULL COOPERATION OF THAT ORGANIZATION IN ANY DEPARTURE, WHETHER BY AIR, LAND OR SEA. THE EGYPTIANS HANDLED THIS VERY EFFECTIVELY IN JUNE, AND WE WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE IT IF THEY WOULD NOW INFORM THE PLO THAT WE ARE PLANNING

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 174982

A FURTHER REDUCTION IN SIZE OF THE EMBASSY AND THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN BEIRUT BECAUSE OF DIFFICULT LIVING CONDITIONS AND THE SUPPLY SITUATION IN THE CITY. WE WOULD LIKE THEM TO IMPRESS VERY STRONGLY ON THE PLO THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR COOPERATING WITH OUR EVACUATION MOVE AS THEY DID IN JUNE. THE PLO SHOULD KNOW THAT WE WILL NEED TO BEGIN NOTIFYING AMERICANS IN BEIRUT AT THE END OF THIS WEEK AND THAT WE ARE PLANNING TO CARRY OUT THE OPERA-

TION EARLY NEXT WEEK.

5. WE APPRECIATED DEEPLY THE ASSISTANCE FAHMY AND SADAT GAVE US IN JUNE, AND WE WOULD ONCE AGAIN HOPE TO HAVE THEIR URGENT HELP AND ADVICE. MOST PARTICULARLY, WE WOULD LIKE THEM TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE PLO IMMEDIATELY, AND OBTAIN

JUST AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE -- WE WILL REALLY NEED IT BY FRIDAY JUNE 16 IF WE ARE TO MAKE OUR PLANS IN TIMELY FASHION -- CONFIRMATION OF PLO WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE. WE ARE ALSO INSTRUCTING AMBASSADOR SEELYE TO ASK THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT TO CONTACT THE PLO THERE. KISSINGER

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